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TESTIMONY

To the Government Administrations and Elections Committee
In Support of Raised Bill 5550, Sec. 11

By John C. Hall

Executive Director, The Jonah Center for Earth and Art

March 13, 2014

I am writing in support of Raised Bill 5550. Sec. 11, to preserve in perpetuity the lands surrounding the water reservoirs that currently serve Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown.

The watershed around these six reservoirs comprises approximately 500 acres of scenic wilderness area filled with rock ledges, abundant mountain laurel, and laced with important hiking trails in the Maromas section of Middletown. I share the concern of many residents of Middletown that these lands might be sold for private residential development if CVH should stop using the reservoirs for water supply. I know that there has already been some discussion of CVH buying water from the City of Middletown rather than continue to operate the hospital's water treatment plant.

The Maromas section of Middletown is under constant threat of development. Most recently, the large electric generating plant known as the Kleen Energy plant, was built on the hillside of Maromas overlooking the Connecticut River. If the CVH reservoirs were sold by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to a private developer, this beautiful unspoiled forest area could be lost to future generations of hikers and nature lovers, and the heart of Maromas would be gutted. The State of Connecticut needs to take action to preserve this precious resource not only to preserve the area, but also to encourage "smart growth" by increasing residential urban density and avoiding more even more suburban sprawl.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation to preserve this critical, recreational woodland and wildlife habitat.

Sincerely,
John C. Hall, Executive Director

Our mission: to foster sustainable relationships among people, other creatures, energy resources, and the environment and to promote interdisciplinary community partnerships in scientific, artistic, and other cultural endeavors.